Drake and dogs 6/5/65

That dupl Muscovite

When Clyde left, my best hand tools went with him — all of my wrenches and a number of others. He left behind a Muscovy Drake and a bench-legged beagle, neither of which I wanted. Neither was his. Ultimately, I got most of my tools back. I was never able to get him to get the drake or the dog, nor was I able to interest their reputed owner, his mistress's brother.

Thatb drake became the most odious creature in my life.

We nejoyed seeing him soar off on his frequent visits to our neighbors. My wife especially dearly loved to see him fly, both because of the symbolism of freedom in flight and because of the power of his flying and the consummate grace of his motions, once he was airborne. Close up, he was hideous to me, ungainly and completely loathsome.

Muscovies are the only domesticated duck that can really fly. Technically, perhaps, they are not even ducks; and despite their names, they have nothing to do with Moscow. They originate in Brazil, and their proper name is "pato". They are at least closely related to the other ducks, and if either the male or the female mates with another breed, the eggs are fertile. The offspring, however, are infertile. Muscoviesm are among the best ducks for eating, with but two major disadvantages: they grow slowly, hence require more time to reach a marketable weight; and the females are relatively small, often weighing less than half as much as

their mates. Despite their small size, they are excellent mothers and can successfully incubate a large number of eggs.

Except for his superior flavor when on the table, there is no kind word I am willing to utter for the drake. He is large, powerful, lascivious and a notorious misceginist. In my eyes he is also pyhsically hideous. Tne various strains of male muscovies have comunu corunculated heads and faces, often both bright and of a vivid crimson. To me. at least, these rpominent growths suggest something unclean and repulsive, a feeling accentuated and perpetuated by unavoidable association with Clyde's duck. I cannot speak of other Muscovies, having to the best of my abilities always avoided them like the plague this one was to me, but Clydes, ~~despite his heritage, was a hyr~~ was literally unclean. Not only did his unfortunate feather hues make his seem this way - he was a soiled white even after a hard rain - but he was also, ~~a hydrophobiac~~ despite his heritage, as confirmed a hydrophobiac as Doctor Samuel Johnson.

Doctor Johnson at least had the excuse that he was a student at Pembroke College, which had no baths. The lexicographer's aversion to what even in that day was regarded as normal bodiily cleanliness he recorded for posterity in his account of his correction of the hostess what had long sought his attendance at

one [illegible] compiler of the first dictionary yielded to her importunings one hot summer. She noticed her other guests found him to be less of an attraction that she had anticipated, and left his company soon after encountering him. When she herself drew neigh the famous man she had no difficulty determining the reason.

As diplomatically as she could the embarrassed lady, after begging the great man's pardon in advance, informed him, "You smell".

"My dxar man", he says he replied, "You smell; I stink."

There is no such extenuation for a duck of any speciaes. If they have no stream or pond, as this one did, they will at least try and bathe in their drinking water, be it as shallow as a teaspoon. This one might have drunk another fluid if any had been available, but he never bathed in the pond or the streams over which he flew. He never even entered it except for an ulterior purpose, which I found by far the most repulsive of his many undesireable traits and habits.

For a reson I have never understood, unless it was to hurt me, Clyde did take the female muscovy with him. Unlike geese, most duck mate promiscuously. The charming and conspicuous exception is the rare Mandarin, a fowl of rare and almost unique beauty. These mate for life and never re-mate should some evil

In fact, I have seen the female drive other males away should they, no matter how innocently, blunder near a mated female. We had an abundance of other ducks.

To numerous these, known as Conrad de Rouen, were quite attractive. They are based on the mallards, from which, except for size, they are indistinguishable. Not of these suited either the taste or the passion of Clyde's muscovy.

He found only Irving, an Erden goose, worthy of his casting of his lewd eye, and he pursued her relentlessly. Big Papa, Irving's devoted mate, naturally objected. Until that muscovy I hated him so I never gave him a name, not even an unpleasant one. He was large for his species. He weighed about 13 pounds.

Although Big Papa was much larger and of unlimited valor, he was no match for the duck in combat for the duck could fly, and the goose couldn't. Big Papa had earlier in his married life encountered a situation in which he had to plan his defense of the sanctity of his home when he couldn't in face to face combat, and he devised a stratagem that met the requirements of this intolerable situation.

From morning to night the awful duck dogged Irving's every steps, barely giving her time to snatch a blade of grass as she sought to evade his unwanted but persistent attentions. Usually it was a procession of Irving, followed by the duck, followed by Big Papa, and it lasted from early in the morning until just about dusk. By the end of the day poor Irving, who comes from a race that

DD5 walks of necessity but not coic choice

walks of necessity but not choice, was exhausted, and her tormentor, her hated and unwanted suitor, could then catch up with her.

Accurately judging the exact moment she couldn't go another step, the demon flew upon her back, intent upon indulging his unnatural lust. At that presice moment Big Papa, whose presence the duck lost in his concentration upon his passion, rushed forawrd. With his powerful bill Big Papa lacthed onto the tip of the muscovy's powerful and long ~~longs~~ wings. ~~Using his neck~~ Domesticated geese have necks of justly reknowned strength. It is perhaos the dtrongest part of their anatomy. Using ~~that~~ his neck in the manner of a comboy cracking a whip, Big Papa lauched the moscovy into space. The duck took off like an airplane from a catapault, ~~involuntarily~~ His involuntary departure gave Big Papa the chance to honk his love, affection and devotion to her chastity over Edwina's back and neck. At first the duck returned to his unwholesome pursuit, and Big Papa would feint combat with him long enough to let Edwina escape. Ultimately, the duck gave up after Big Papa's daily catapaulting. He never did succeed in mating with Edwina, although by human if not avian standards he regularly violated her person. But he never stopped trying until I dope out the scheme that worked an appropriate end to his career.

His indecent sexual appetite was equalled by only his greed for food. This was his undoing.

Daily my Great dislike for him grew into a consuming hatred. The sexual habits of our male ducks of whatever species was never attractive. Unlike ganders, whose relations with their females is constant and who are devoted exclusively to them, drakes play the field. Usually, the only female that who at any particular moment is attractive to the males is the one with whom a drake is mating. At that time the unoccupied drakes mill around, either on land of water, bob their heads and necks in lustful anticipation, and virtually line up to take turns on her and her alone. Unpleasant as I found this characteristic, the Muscovy's habit I found absolutely repugnant, and I determined to get rid of him. His ability to fly thwarted my determination until I got downright scheming.

I began by scattering extra corn, after the evening feeding, on the ground outside a pen in the barn in which if de fed the waterfowl when it was raining, to protect the feed. The door was usually proped open so the wind couodn't close it. After several days, most of the corn was inside that pen, with just a little on the outside. Then I got to depositing all of it inside the pen, after which I removed the prop. In this way the Muscovy got used to satisfying his greed inside

the pen and adjusted to the swinging of the door in the breeze. He thought as singlemindedly of that extra corn as he did of Edwina. One night I slammed the door on him and he was trapped!

His wings did him scant good inside a building. It took me a few minutes, but I finally hooked him by the neck and despite his struggles he was secirely trussed.

Then I plucked him and prep began to prepare him for cooking.

That duck was the toughest of the many thousands upon uncountable thousands of fowl I slaughtered. His skin was so hard it defied the knife. I then tried to cut him up with a meat cleaver. Both the table upon which he laiy and the duck memely bounced under the sharp blow. Finally I placed him on a towel on the unyeilding concrete of the basement floor and worked him into pieces. There was no possibly of cooking him normally, and I didn't want to raost him anyways.

We marinated him for two days, then ground him into a pate. My wife couldn't bear to touch it, but I must confess I found him at last a delicacy. He was precociously large and abundantly meaty. He made an abundant pate which, with that manner of preparation, had excellent keeping qualities. Our guests and I found that in the end, this Muscovy was delicious. I still regard this